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Department of Health and Family Services

DIVISION OF DISABILITY AND ELDER SERVICES

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To: Hospitals	Hosp 05
Nursing Homes	NH 05
Community Based Residential Facilities	CBRF 03
Ambulatory Surgical Centers	ASC 02
End Stage Renal Disease Facilities	ESRD 01
Hospice	HSPC 04

From: Jane Walters, Deputy Director
Bureau of Quality Assurance

Via: Otis Woods, Director

Health Facility Construction Plan Reviews and Onsite Inspections

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide notice of interim measures the Bureau of Quality Assurance (BQA) has implemented to ensure a timely response to construction and remodeling plans submitted for approval. The recent retirement of three BQA life safety code and plan review staff has seriously compromised our ability to respond to, and/or approve, all construction and remodeling projects. While two of the three positions have been filled, challenges remain in timely plan review and response. We are currently in the recruitment process to fill the remaining vacancy.

Current assignments for facility remodeling and new construction plan review are as follows:

Nursing Home Plan Review and Survey Staff

- Northeast Region (Green Bay) – Kevin Joyce, P.E.
- Northern Region (Rhineland) - Kevin Joyce, P.E. and Romaine Anderson, R.A.
- Southeast Region (Milwaukee) – Keith Weitner, R.A.
- Southern Region (Madison) - David Beyer, P.E.
- Western Region (Eau Claire) – Romaine Anderson, R.A.

Hospital and Hospice Plan Review and Survey Staff

- Southern and Southeastern region surveys and plan review workloads: Ganesh Shrestha, P. E., Rich Batchelder, R.A., and William Lauzon, P.E.
- Northeastern, Northern and Western regions survey and plan review workload: Tom Ankeny, R.A., Lynn Wallace, P.E.

End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) facilities, Ambulatory Surgical Centers (ASC) and Freestanding Clinic Plan Review and Survey Staff

- ESRD, ASC, and freestanding clinic plan reviews are “courtesy,” i.e., they are done without administrative code authority and with no corresponding plan review fee. During this time BQA engineers are not conducting “courtesy” plan reviews.
- Providers and suppliers are encouraged to ensure that the firms, which with they contract to design their facilities, are complying with the WI Commercial Building Code and all other applicable construction codes.

Community Based Residential Facilities (CBRF) and Adult Family Homes (AFH)

- All BQA engineering staff are conducting CBRF and AFH plan reviews. Direct inquiries into the status of CBRF or AFH plans to:
Lyle Buchberger, (608) 243-2088, buchbla@dhfs.state.wi.us
Lyle will notify callers which BQA engineer to contact regarding plan review status.

Because of these staff shortages and continued heavy construction plan submission, BQA has had to prioritize its workload. Consistent with past practice, BQA has prioritized engineering workload to first complete surveys, then construction plan reviews, followed by onsite construction inspections.

Effective immediately, BQA engineers will continue to conduct critical construction inspections, but will be scaling back onsite construction inspections. In general, onsite inspections for major projects will occur prior to installation of final finishes (ceiling and walls) and again when the facility is ready for the final occupancy inspection. Construction verification for smaller remodeling projects may be handled via paper submittals to the assigned BQA engineer from the design or construction firm, and there may be no onsite construction inspection. This will vary by project.

BQA is appreciative of the positive working relationships between its staff, and providers, and design and construction firms. We are cognizant of the importance of timely construction plan reviews to both facilities and designers/construction firms in meeting deadlines and schedules. BQA is aware of the value that stakeholders place on more frequent periodic onsite construction inspections. When workload permits, BQA engineers will have additional flexibility for more frequent onsite, construction inspections.

Please share this information with your design and construction firms.

Thank you for your cooperation and patience as BQA orients new engineering staff. If you have any questions, please call Cremear Mims, HSS Section Chief at (608) 243-2028 for hospital and other non-LTC provider projects; Paul Peshek, RCRS Section Chief, at (608) 267-0351 for nursing home or ICF/MR projects; or Kevin Coughlin, Assisted Living Section Chief, at (920) 448-5255 for CBRF projects.